DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 344 893 TM 018 171

AUTHOR Shriner, James G.; And Others
TITLE National Survey of State Practices in Assessment of Educational Outcomes for Students with Disabilities.
PUB DATE Apr 92
NOTE 45p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 20-24, 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accountability; *Administrators; Databases; *Disabilities; *Educational Assessment; Elementary School Students; Elementary Secondary Education; Evaluation Methods; Interviews; *National Surveys; Needs Assessment; *Outcomes of Education; Secondary School Students; Special Education; *State Programs; Statewide Planning
IDENTIFIERS Assessment of Educ Outcomes for Stu with Disabil; Educational Indicators; Large Scale Programs

ABSTRACT

The purposes of the survey described in this paper were to: (1) produce a database on state efforts to develop systems for assessing educational outcomes; (2) assess state needs for solutions to technical and implementation problems; (3) identify important state-level information and existing databases; and (4) assess efforts to design a comprehensive system of indicators in general and special education. Fifty-nine interviews with administrators in the 50 states and 9 areas (territories and the District of Columbia) provided information on state practices. Overall, the survey confirms that considerable state and local resources are being directed to outcomes assessment for students with disabilities. Generally, the emphasis has been on documenting the process, rather than the results, of education. Participation and exit data are being collected and may provide valuable information. State-level outcomes information is usually generated from large-scale assessments in which the participation of students with mild disabilities is not separately reported. States are looking for clarification about expectations and requirements for a new emphasis on outcomes as they face demands for increased accountability. Twelve tables and six figures present survey findings. (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
JAMES G. SHRINER
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED344893

National Survey of State Practices in Assessment of Educational Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

James G. Shriner, Martha L. Thurlow, Robert H. Bruininks, Stanley L. Deno, James E. Ysseldyke
University of Minnesota

Kevin S. McGrew
St. Cloud State University

Paper presented at the April, 1992 AERA annual meeting in San Francisco, California

NCEO
355 Elliott Hall
University of Minnesota
75 E. River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Running Head: Outcomes

TM018171

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

OVERVIEW

Many reform initiatives have been recorded throughout the history of the educational system in the United States. One of the most significant educational initiatives for children and youth with disabilities was the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA, PL 94-142), recently reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, PL 101-476). IDEA and its predecessor, EHA, require public schools to provide a free and appropriate education to all children and youth with disabilities. Further, these laws provide students with disabilities with the right to participate to the extent possible in the least restrictive educational environment. Today most people agree that students with disabilities have achieved access to education. As stated by the National Council on Disability (1989):

> Wholesale segregation and denial of participation of students with disabilities are for the most part behind us. The time has come to shift the focus to quality and student outcomes. (p. 1)

This statement by the National Council on Disability placed it in step with the educational reform movement of the 1990s, one focused on the results (or "outcomes") of education.

The term "outcomes" has been defined in many ways by persons and groups throughout the nation (Ysseldyke, Thurlow, Bruininks, Deno, McGrew, & Shriner, 1991), and agreement on the definition is hard to reach. Most agree, however, that outcomes cover all areas of student development and well-being, and can be broadly categorized as knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Many of the same persons and groups are searching for ways to assess the extent to which the desired outcomes have been achieved. Already data on indicators of these outcomes are being collected through vast assessment efforts at national, state, and local levels. For example, the National

 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the current vehicle for national and state-by-state assessment of educational indicators that provide information on progress toward desired outcomes in the area of academic achievement. Assessments are conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, history and geography, and other areas (ETS, 1990). States and local school districts are also collecting information on academic achievement, and increasingly, on other outcomes such as graduation rate, dropout rate, and post-school status. These indicators are used as evidence of the results of education.

While more and more states are using an expanding range of indicators to assess some of the outcomes of education, most of these indicators yield information about students in general education. Students receiving special education services are often excluded from these efforts. With the enactment of PL 94-142, the federal government required states to collect information on students with disabilities, but most of the required information addressed accessibility issues. In the mid 1980s, reporting requirements were expanded to include exit information (e.g., dropout). This information was considered to reflect an educational outcome. Some states have gone beyond the federal requirements, including the measurement of other kinds of student outcomes for students with disabilities.

Walther-Thomas (1990) documented the tendency of states to focus on a single outcome area. She examined state-level practices in the collection, use, and dissemination of outcomes assessment information on students with *mild* disabilities. She found that the majority of states do not assess the educational outcomes of students with mild disabilities beyond what is required by federal mandates. She termed the trend discussed by NASDSE as that of "states finding niches" of outcomes assessment efforts, collecting data they find manageable

in areas with which they are comfortable. She found that most state agencies do not have enough personnel with evaluation and research skills to make wider use of the data that are collected. Even states identified by Walther-Thomas as "exemplary" did not take a comprehensive view of outcomes in practice.

There are many reasons to update the information that we have on what states are doing to assess the outcomes of education for students with disabilities. First, State Directors of Special Education and other policy makers, both in general and special education, need to be aware of what other states are doing. There are new initiatives being started every year, not to mention many forecasted changes in accountability and assessment activities. Second, there is a need for national groups and local groups to be aware of state activities and their potential impact. Third, an accounting of what states are doing across multiple outcome areas is needed to document changes over time in states' efforts to address all areas of student development.

The Survey of State Practices was conducted to: (a) produce a data base on state efforts to develop systems to assess educational outcomes, (b) assess states' needs for solutions to technical/implementation problems, (c) identify important state-level information and existing data bases, and (d) assess efforts of states to design a comprehensive system of indicators in general and special education.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Design

NCEO staff, consultants, and research assistants conducted an extensive literature search and contacted many policy groups (e.g., NASDSE -- National Association of State Directors of Special Education; CCSSO -- Council of Chief State School Officers; NGA -- National Governors' Association) in order to

define important research questions about state outcome assessment activities. The first year focused on characterizing the state of practice regarding outcomes assessment. The decision to conduct a telephone interview during the first year's survey was based on the belief that the qualitative nature of the issues required an interactive format.

Protocol development. A draft of the survey protocol was distributed to NCEO staff and consultants, who provided extensive input on the instrument's content and organization. This input resulted in major revisions in the scope of the interview and the format of the protocol. For example, direct questions were deleted about the existence of conceptual models. The state survey protocol was field tested in three states through interviews conducted by the interview coordinator. Specific feedback, sought from each field test respondent, focused on the format, duration, content, and clarity of the interview and protocol. Each field test was tape recorded, to allow other NCEO personnel the chance to review and comment on the interview process and adequacy of the protocol in capturing the desired information. These tape recordings were also used for interviewer training.

Directory of Respondents

NASDSE provided NCEO with a listing of State Directors of Special Education. The Directors were contacted by mail, asked to participate in the survey, and asked to verify their address, telephone, and facsimile numbers. Each director was also asked to designate an alternate respondent who would serve as the interviewee if the director was unable to participate in the survey. The initial registration was completed by February, 1991. However, there continued to be changes in the list throughout the time when interviews were being conducted.

Interview Materials

Pre-interview guide. Respondents were provided with a Pre-interview Information guide. This document contained brief background information on NCEO, general issues to be addressed in the interview, definitions to be used, and the specific questions to be asked regarding assessment activities.

Interviewer's script/protocol. Interviewers used a combination script and protocol document during the telephone interviews. The format allowed for immediate recording of responses, including coding of forced-choice items. Branching patterns and transition directions were embedded in the document based on the recommendations of Dillman (1978). Seven primary topics were covered by the questionnaire: (1) areas in which outcomes are assessed, (2) procedures of assessment and uses of data, (3) inclusion/exclusion of students with disabilities in assessments, (4) assessment accommodations for students with disabilities, (5) identified concerns, barriers, and problems related to assessment of outcomes for students with disabilities, (6) technical and implementation assistance needs, and (7) innovative practices related to assessment of outcomes for students with disabilities. Only the first six topics are reported here; information on innovative practices was often speculative and related to concerns other than outcomes. The number of items in each of these areas is summarized in Table 1. Additional questions were asked about state computerized data bases, state required or recommended IEP forms, and available written materials on outcomes assessments. A checklist of the materials requested from the state was included at the end of the protocol.

Insert Table 1 about here

Table 1

Numbers of Items in Primary Topics Covered by State Interview

Topic	Number of Items	Sample Items
Outcomes Areas Assessed	10	Does [state] have any state-level information on academic achievement? Does [state] have any state-level information on vocational skills?
Assessment Procedures and Uses of Data	10 per area	What information does [state] have on academic achievement? Who collects this information? What instruments are used to collect those data? For which disability groups is this measure used?
Inclusion/Exclusion	7	Do any students with disabilities take part in tests given to General Education students that are collected and/or reported at the state level? What decision rules or guidelines are used to determine which students participate and which are excluded? Who makes the decision to include or exclude a student with disabilities regarding the outcomes assessment in general education?

Table 1 -- continued

Topic	Number of Items	Sample Items
Assessment Accommodations	5	What accommodations or special provisions are made for students with disabilities in outcomes assessments conducted either by the general education unit or special education unit? Are there written guidelines on these accommodations?
Concerns, Barriers, and Problems	1	What problems or barriers have you encountered or do you anticipate in the areas of developing, implementing, reporting, or using outcomes information on a statewide bases?
Technical and Implementation Assistance Needs	1	What type of assistance is needed in order to solve these problems?
Innovative Practices	1	What is happening in [state] that you believe is particularly successful or innovative in relation to the assessment of outcomes for students with disabilities?

Training of Interviewers

Interviewers for the initial survey were the interview coordinator, three advanced graduate students in the Department of Educational Psychology, and the Assistant Director of NCEO. Another advanced graduate student conducted one make-up interview. The advanced graduate students were selected because of their excellent communication skills, established knowledge of special education, and familiarity with the activities of NCEO.

The field test version of the survey and recordings of the field test interviews were used as training materials for the first phase of practice. The interviewers were provided a thorough briefing on the question-by-question objectives of the survey. Possible responses and suggested ways of dealing with interviewee questions were discussed. Each interviewer then completed a survey profile from the tape recordings, after which the process was reviewed and questions discussed and answered. For a second practice phase, the interview coordinator served as a respondent for mock interviews in which the modified survey and protocol forms were used. The interviewers also met with the interview coordinator periodically during the actual survey phase to discuss and resolve issues that had arisen.

Conduct and Editing of Survey

The interview coordinator conducted 33 interviews, the advanced graduate students 25 interviews, and the Assistant Director 1 interview. During each interview, the interviewer completed the protocol and coded forced choice responses. To minimize redundancy and the on-phone time required, requests were made for materials and for the names of contact persons in the state agency who were more familiar with certain procedures or data types. Protocols were completed and/or edited using the tape recordings of the interviews, materials received from states, and through

follow-up phone calls to other persons in the state agency. At least one follow-up phone call was made to 39 states (66%). In many instances, several calls to different persons (e.g., data manager, Vocational Education supervisor) were required. These efforts were made to verify information and minimize missing data to the greatest extent possible.

Direct verification. A summary profile with responses to all survey items was prepared for each state. The respondents were asked to check their responses for completeness and accuracy, and to return the profile to NCEO if changes needed to be made. Respondents were notified in a follow-up letter that their revisions had been received and entered. Those respondents not returning a form with revisions were sent a follow-up letter after 2-3 weeks indicating that NCEO was assuming all information in the state's summary profile was correct. Thirty-two profiles (54%) were returned; 28 (47% of all respondents) reported changes of some kind.

An analysis was conducted of the nature of changes made by those sending back or calling in changes to the summary profiles. Changes were coded as either clarifications of information presented, additions to the information presented, deletions of some of the information presented, or corrections to the information. The number of individual changes made by states ranged from 1 to 41, with the average being 11.25. The most frequent kind of change was additions (51%), followed by corrections (22%), clarifications (17%), and deletions (10%). Fifteen of the states made changes that were considered significant in that they represented a change in a response to one of the primary questions of the interview. For example, one of these states changed a response to the question about whether the state had a computer-based data set on students with disabilities from "no" to "yes (in development)." Another state originally responded that no formal or written

rules existed for inclusion/exclusion of students in general education testing. The returned verification, however, was accompanied by a legislative statute and regulations on inclusion and accommodation procedures that had existed for five years.

Data Processing

Management of quantitative data/coding. In terms of data types, the survey protocols consisted of three main kinds of items: forced-choice responses, open-ended questions, and the grid record sheets for specific outcomes assessment activities. The first two sections were coded and entered separately from the grids because they consisted of items that evoked more directly codable responses. (Open-ended questions that were included here had responses that tended to form logical clusters.)

Management of qualitative data. An important question in the survey asked each respondent to describe particularly successful or innovative practices or plans regarding outcomes information in the state. These responses were recorded using a FileMaker® program that allowed for systematic searches of responses for selected descriptors (e.g., curriculum-based measurement).

Interrater agreement. Fifteen states were chosen at random and a reliability check of coding for these states was conducted. Interrater agreement was computed by simple point-by-point comparisons (agreements divided by agreements plus disagreements, multiplied by 100). For the 15 states, exact agreement of 82% was obtained for the quantitative/grid data. No reliability check of the qualitative data was conducted since only one item was kept in this category.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Reporting Findings

Findings are organized in this paper according to the major issues covered in the survey. To make the reporting of data more meaningful for certain questions, findings are presented separately for the 50 "regular" states and the nine "unique" states (American Samoa, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, District of Columbia, Guam, Palau, Puerto Rico, Republic of the Marshall Islands and U.S. Virgin Islands). When separation of data does not assist in interpretation, it is clearly indicated that all states are included. It is important to remember that only data considered to be state-level information is discussed in this paper.

RESULTS

Participation and Exit Data

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires states to report two types of student data on a yearly basis: participation data and exit data. Participation information includes counts of the numbers of students in various special education categories and placements by grade and/or age. Exit information includes counts of the numbers of students who exit school by graduating, dropping out, earning completion certificates, etc. Some states collect information that exceeds these OSEP requirements. Twenty-three regular states and two unique states have statewide collection of extra participation information. Thirteen regular states and one unique state have statewide collection of exit information beyond that required by OSEP.

The types of extensions of student participation information that states collect often are specific accountings of each student's time in general or special education classes (see Table 2). Seventeen regular states and one unique state have these types of data. Ten regular states and one unique state

have other types of extensions of required data (e.g., hours of service by provider, extracurricular activities, students' social involvement, attendance data, or suspension/expulsion information).

Insert Table 2 about here

In Table 3 it can be seen that most states collecting data beyond the required data have more detailed accountings of the circumstances of student exits from school. Several states that award multiple diploma types keep track of these at the state level for special education students. Trends or rates in graduation or dropout are collected for special education students by only a few states.

Insert Table 3 about here

Uses of data. All states report required data to the federal government. In addition, Table 4 shows that participation and exit data often are used for program evaluation, for reports to state legislatures, and to send to local education agencies. Reports to the state education agency, other state agencies, or nonspecified accountability reports include a variety of within-state documents. The main point is that participation and exit data are a major part of states' data collection efforts, and may hold valuable information that is not being used fully at this time.

Insert Table 4 about here

Outcomes Areas and Assessors

Assessment activities in a state may be directed by different groups. For descriptive purposes, the "assessor" is defined as the primary unit or department responsible for data collection. For reporting purposes here, the assessor is categorized as general education, special education, or both.

Table 2

Extensions of Participation Data

STATE	Suspension/Expulsion	Attendance	Social Involvement	Extracurricular Activities	Hours Service/Provider	Time in Special Education	Time in General Education
Colorado					X		X
Connecticut						X	
Georgia						X	
Hawaii							X
Illinois							X
Kansas						X	
Maryland					X		
Massachusetts							X
Minnesota							X
Montana							X
Nebraska		X					
New Hampshire				X			X
New Jersey					X		
North Carolina	X						
Oklahoma							X
Oregon						X	
Pennsylvania							X
Tennessee						X	
Texas			X	X			X
Vermont							X
Virginia				X			
Wisconsin							X
Wyoming		X					
Guam					X		
CNMI						X	

Table 3

Extensions of Exit Data

STATE	Graduation Trend/Rates	Dropout Trend/Rates	Dropout Reason	Diploma Type
Florida				X
Georgia				X
Maine			X	X
Maryland			X	
Massachusetts		X		
Nebraska	X		X	
Nevada				X
New Hampshire			X	
New Jersey			X	
Pennsylvania			X	
Utah		X		X
Vermont	X			X
Virginia				X
Palau				X

Table 4

Uses of Participation and Exit Data

STATE	PARTICIPATION											EXIT										
	Federal Report	State Legislature	LEA Report	SEA Report	Other State Agencies	Report for State	Accountability	Student Decision	Program Evaluation	Parent Report	Other	Federal Report	State Legislature	LEA Report	SEA Report	Other State Agencies	Report for State	Accountability	Student Decision	Program Evaluation	Parent Report	Other
Alabama	X											X										
Alaska	X											X										
Arizona	X	X		X		X	X					X			X		X					
Arkansas	X											X										
California	X	X		X								X	X	X	X							
Colorado	X	X	X	X								X	X	X								
Connecticut	X		X			X					X	X					X					
Delaware	X	X						X				X	X									
Florida	X											X		X				X		X		
Georgia	X	X	X									X	X	X						X		
Hawaii	X		X		X	X						X		X			X					
Idaho	X		X					X				X		X						X		
Illinois	X	X	X				X					X	X	X								
Indiana	X						X	X				X						X		X		
Iowa	X			X								X			X							
Kansas	X							X				X								X		
Kentucky	X							X				X		X								
Louisiana	X							X				X							X	X		
Maine	X					X						X					X					
Maryland	X	X						X				X	X							X		
Massachusetts	X	X										X	X									
Michigan	X		X									X		X								
Minnesota	X	X	X									X	X	X								
Mississippi	X											X										
Missouri	X											X	X	X								
Montana	X		X					X				X										
Nebraska	X					X						X					X					
Nevada	X											X								X		
New Hampshire	X	X	X					X				X	X	X								
New Jersey	X		X	X			X	X				X		X	X							
New Mexico	X			X								X			X							
New York	X											X					X			X		X
North Carolina	X	X						X				X	X	X				X				
North Dakota	X			X								X			X							
Ohio	X	X										X	X									
Oklahoma	X											X										
Oregon	X			X								X			X							
Pennsylvania	X			X								X		X	X		X					
Rhode Island	X							X				X										
South Carolina	X											X										
South Dakota	X											X										
Tennessee	X											X										
Texas	X							X		X		X										X
Utah	X											X		X								
Vermont	X											X								X		
Virginia	X							X				X		X						X		
Washington	X											X								X		
West Virginia	X											X										
Wisconsin	X	X	X									X	X	X								
Wyoming	X	X										X	X									
Am Samoa	X							X				X								X		
BIA	X							X				X								X		
DC	X											X										
Guam	X		X									X		X								
CNMI	X											X										
RMI	X											X										
Palau	X											X		X				X		X		
Puerto Rico	X							X				X								X		
USVI	X							X				X								X		

Vocational education and assessment units are considered to be part of general education. This categorization is a simplification of actual reports from states.

Table 5 shows that general education is primarily responsible for the assessment of achievement outcomes. General education administers the academic achievement effort in thirty-four of the thirty-nine regular states and in six of the eight unique states that have achievement data. State-level information is generated most often from these large-scale general education assessments in which students with mild disabilities may have participated. Special education rarely conducts its own achievement assessments.

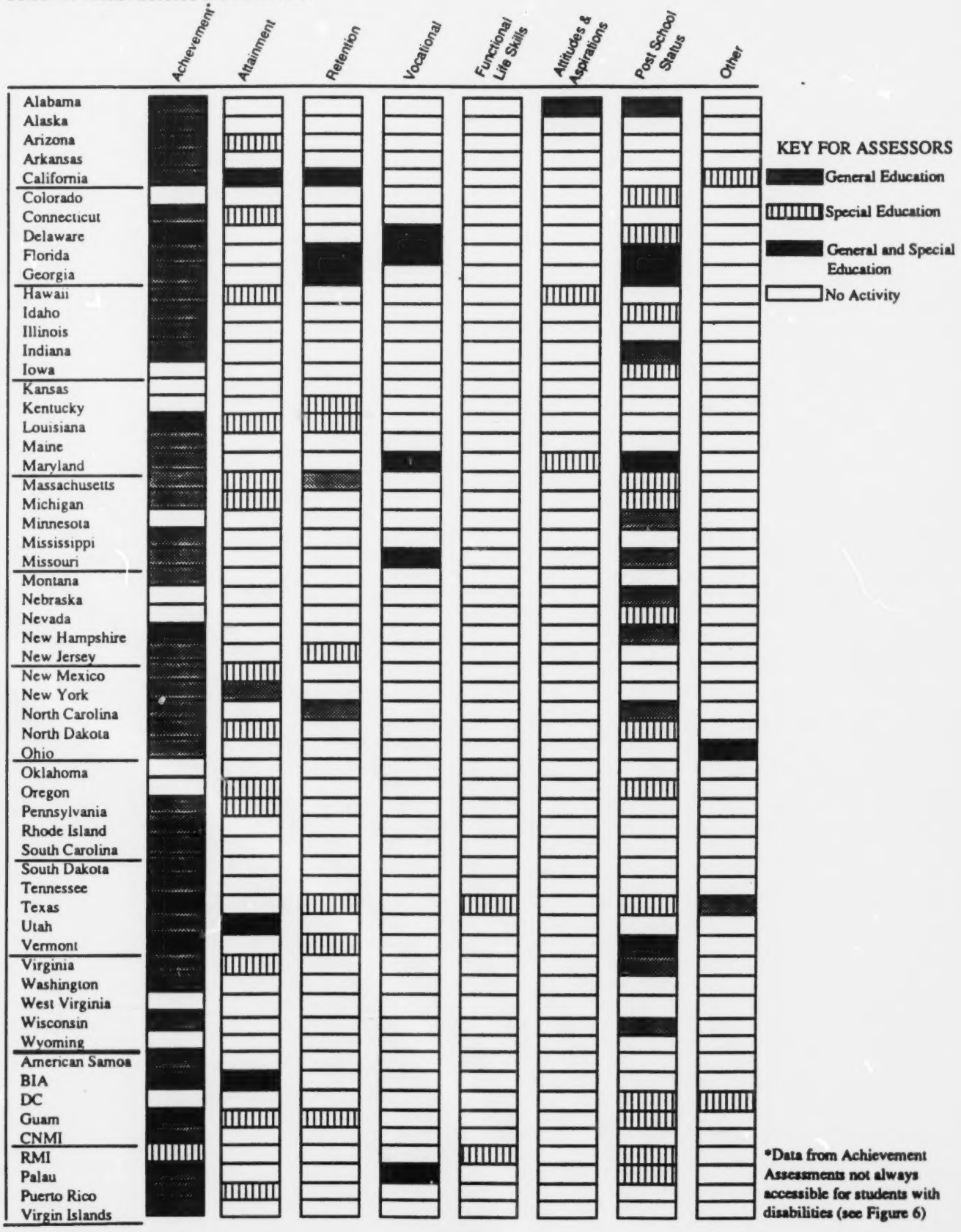
Insert Table 5 about here

Fourteen regular states and three unique states have state-level information on the school attainment of students with disabilities. "Attainment" is defined as the highest grade or program completed by a student. Only those states indicating that grade level or program completion information is aggregated at the state level are included in this category. States indicating that completion information could be inferred from enrollment data are not included. In sixteen of the seventeen states, special education is involved in obtaining attainment information.

Ten regular states and one unique state collect information on retention of students with disabilities. In six of these, special education is responsible for collecting these data, while in two others retention data on special education students are obtained by the general education unit. Joint efforts are responsible for retention data in the remaining three states.

Only the assessment of in-school vocational skills is reported under the vocational skills column in Table 5. This is distinguished from vocational skills assessed after a student has left school. Post-school vocational skills

Table 5
Outcomes Areas Assessed and Assessors



*Data from Achievement Assessments not always accessible for students with disabilities (see Figure 6)

assessment is captured in the post-school status category. The assessment of in-school vocational skills occurs in four regular states and one unique state, always through the combined efforts of special education and vocational education.

Only one regular and one unique state have state-level assessments of functional life maintenance skills (e.g., self care, adaptive behavior, domestic skills) of students with disabilities. Post-school information related to these skills is not included in this category.

Three regular states assess the attitudes and aspirations of students with disabilities while they are enrolled in school. Post-school collection of information on attitudes and aspirations is not represented here. Even if it had been, the general picture would be one of minimal attempts to assess affective outcomes.

Information on the post-school status and experiences of former special education students is collected in twenty-three regular states and four unique states. In ten regular states and four unique states, these data are gathered by the special education unit. Four states gather post-school data through a combined effort of special education and general education. Post-school status information is gathered through general education efforts (usually vocational education) in nine regular states.

Three regular states and one unique state have other types of outcomes data on children and youth with disabilities. Colorado has preschool follow-up data. Ohio has IEP objective mastery data. The District of Columbia has parent and stakeholder satisfaction information. Each of these efforts is a special education project. Texas has retrospective vocationally-relevant information from a vocational education effort.

Many types of data are collected within states, but often these data are not aggregated on a statewide basis (e.g., local district studies of student outcomes). Because the data collection of interest in this paper is limited to state-level aggregated data, caution must be exercised in interpreting and comparing the extent of data collection activities in a state.

Uses of data. A comparison of the primary uses of participation, exit, achievement, and post-school status data is provided in Figure 1. Most obvious from this comparison is that required data are used mostly to produce reports to the federal agency as well as to other constituencies. When achievement and post-school status data are collected, they are used more often for purposes other than reporting. Still, the emphasis on reporting data is clear. This is a concern in some states where the volume of data already being produced is being devalued in light of current reform movements. At the same time, some states are noting the need to raise stakeholder awareness of the value of outcomes data before support can be obtained for new data collection efforts.

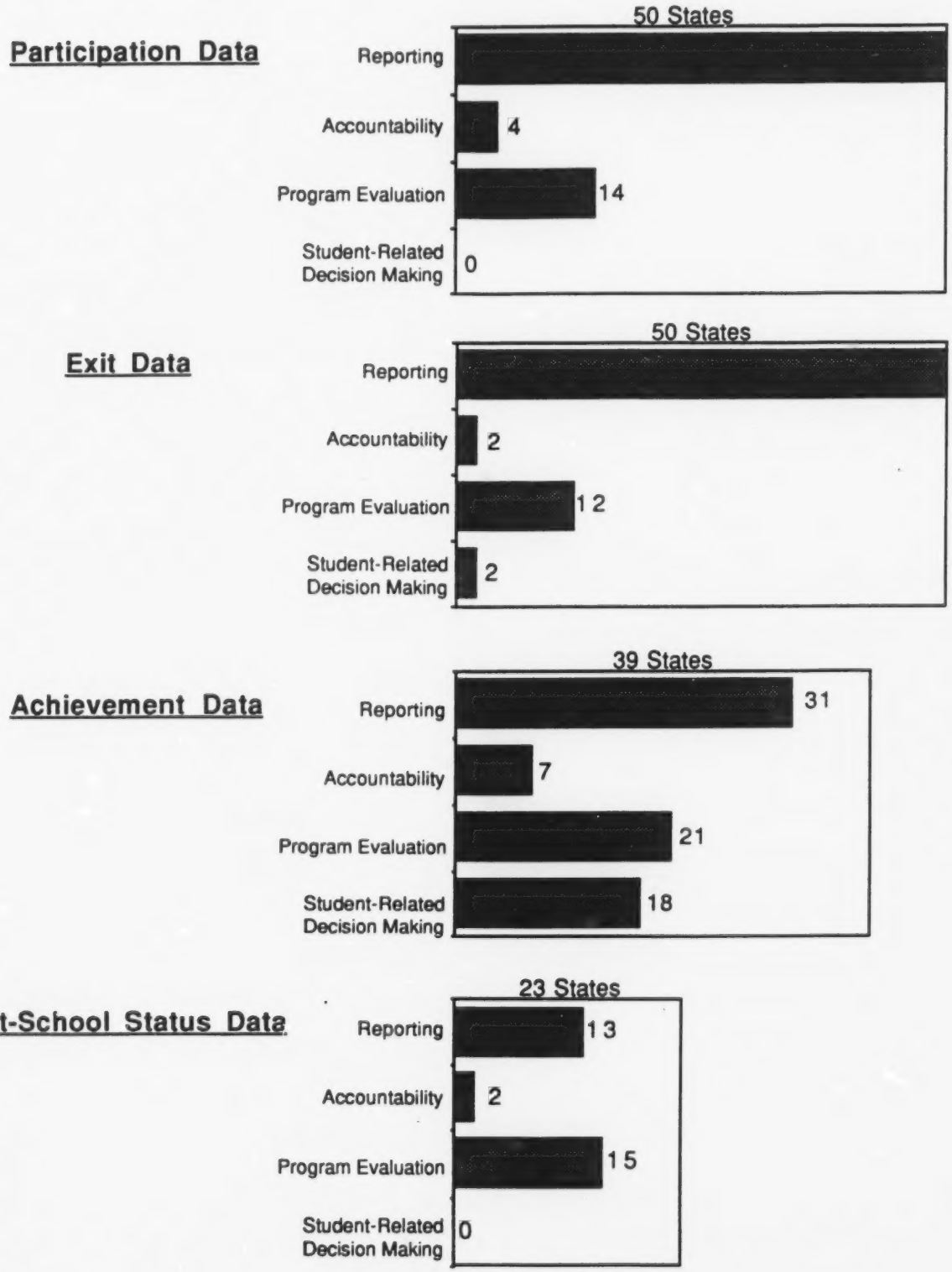
Insert Figure 1 about here

Types of Achievement Information

Figure 2 shows, in summary form, the types of student achievement data that are collected in the states. The vast majority of information comes from general education testing in which students with disabilities may participate. References to "IEP objectives met" reflect the efforts of some states to make greater use of the IEP document and results of annual evaluations of student progress in meeting IEP objectives. While this information is supposed to be state-level data, the IEP may have been identified simply because it is a required state document. Some states probably did not view the IEP as an

Figure 1

How Regular States Use Collected Data



alternative assessment yielding state-level information, even though it is required by the state.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Students with disabilities who do not participate in general education achievement assessments may participate in alternative assessments. Table 6 shows the states that use alternative assessments. Typically, the IEP is the focus of the alternative assessment.

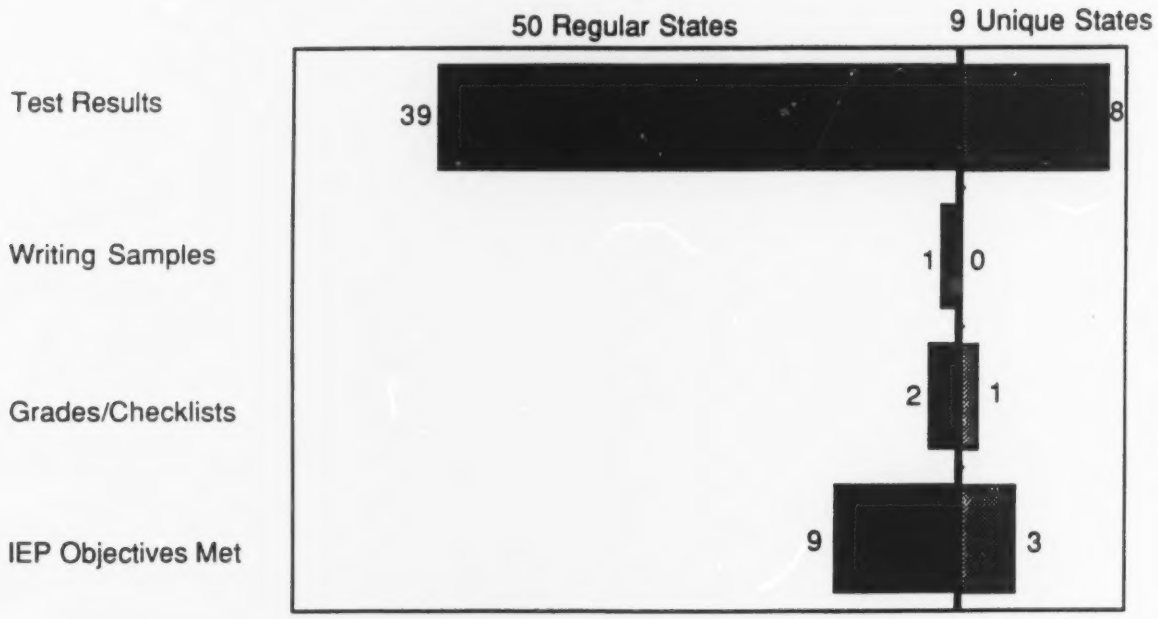
Insert Table 6 about here

Inclusion and Accommodations

Inclusion estimates. Estimating the number or percentage of students with disabilities who participate in statewide assessments is difficult for states. Table 7 is a summary of the estimates given by states. Numerical counts or estimates are presented for 23 states. This response rate seems low, given that students with disabilities participate in general education assessments in all but a few states and given the interview procedure which directed that if the primary respondent for the interview did not know the extent of student participation, follow-up telephone calls were to be attempted to persons within the state agency named as likely to have the data. Because only thirty-nine provided achievement assessment activity information, respondents not describing activities did not provide information on the extent of participation. Respondents who did describe activities sometimes did not provide information on the extent of student participation in general education assessments if students with disabilities could not be identified in that data set. Some states reported that non-identification was purposeful (e.g., VT), while others commented that identification was something they wanted and would be possible in the future.

Figure 2

Types of Achievement Information*



*Achievement information is from both general and special education efforts. It is unclear whether IEP information is actually state-level information.

Table 6

Regular States Reporting Use of Alternative Assessments for Students with Disabilities Excluded from General Education Assessments

State	Assessment Description
Arkansas	IEP Evaluation Component
Colorado	Writing Samples / CBM
Florida	Not Provided
Hawaii	IEP Evaluation Component
Iowa	IEP Evaluation Component
Kentucky	IEP Evaluation Component
Louisiana	Not Provided
Missouri	IEP Evaluation Component
New Jersey	IEP Evaluation Component
New Mexico	IEP Evaluation Component
New York	Local District Choice
Oregon	Not Provided
South Carolina	IEP Evaluation Component
Tennessee	IEP Evaluation Component
Wisconsin	IEP Evaluation Component

Unique States Reporting Use of Alternative Assessments for Students with Disabilities Excluded from General Education Assessments

State	Assessment Description
Guam	IEP Evaluation Component
Palau	IEP Evaluation Component
Rep. of the Marshall Islands	IEP Evaluation Component

Insert Table 7 about here

Clearly, there is some confusion regarding the participation of students with disabilities in assessments conducted and/or reported by state agencies. In one state, for example, "no achievement assessments" were reported, but the respondent indicated (and later verified) that students with disabilities not only participated in general education assessments, but could be identified as well. Variation from one state to the next in participation rates is also problematic. The percentages (which range from 2% to 104%) also suggest that there may be considerable confusion about the inclusion of students with disabilities. These data indicate that a first step toward better information on outcomes for students with disabilities is to know how many students with disabilities actually participate in existing assessment systems. Next, there is a need to look at variability in rates to determine ways to reduce that variability.

Inclusion decisions. Despite the apparent confusion about numbers of students with disabilities who participate in achievement assessments, many states do have written rules about inclusion of students with disabilities. These states are shown in Figure 3. Of the forty-nine regular states in which students participate in statewide testing, thirty-four have formal or written guidelines for these decisions. Four of the unique states have formal or written guidelines. Despite these guidelines, State Directors of Special Education often question how consistently the guidelines are implemented in different settings. Variations in participation may be attributable to the motivation of decision makers to include or exclude students with disabilities in large-scale assessments.

Insert Figure 3 about here

Table 7

Estimated Participation of Students with Disabilities
in State Achievement Assessments

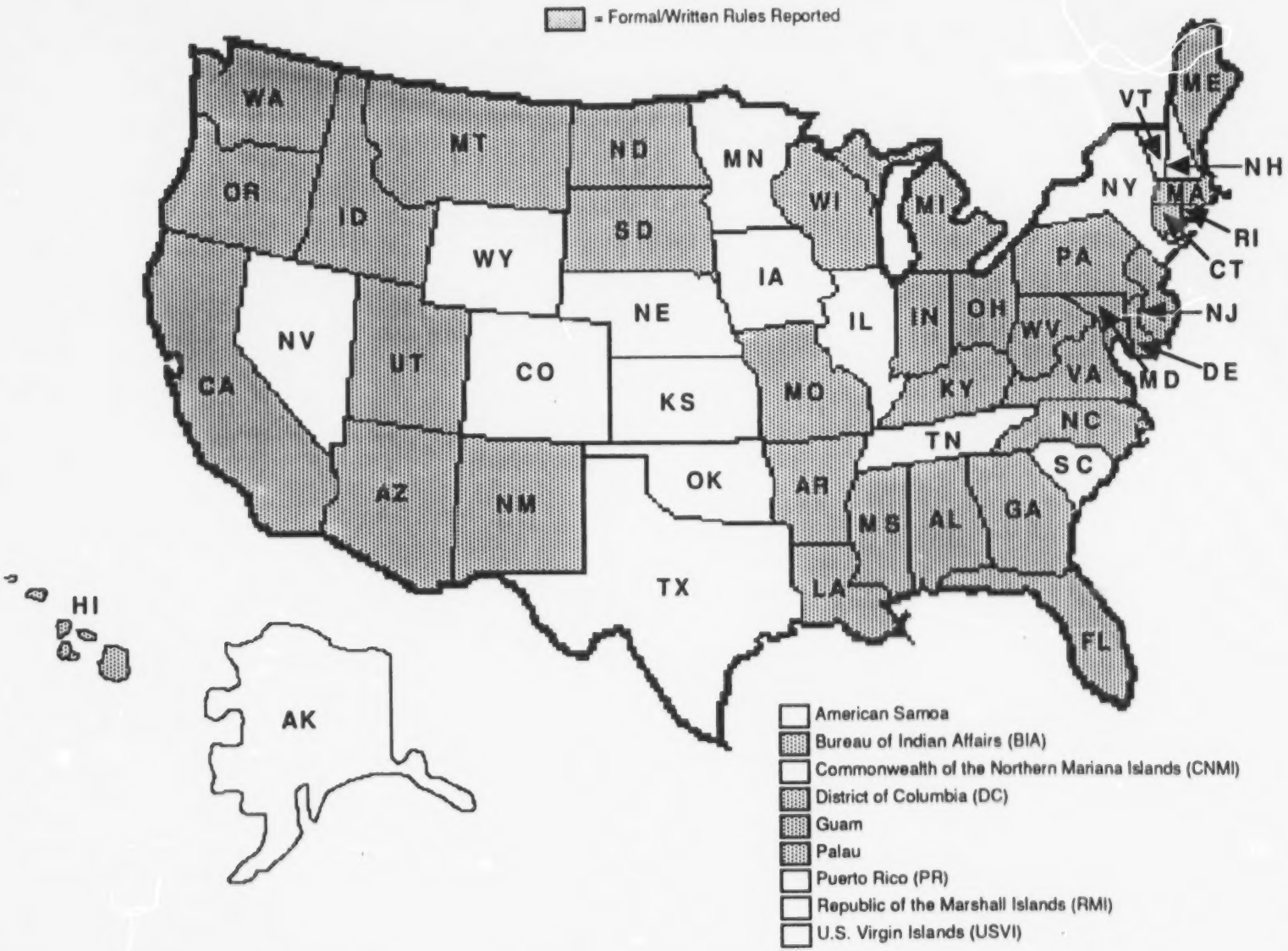
STATE	NUMBER	PERCENT
California	-----	over 90%
Connecticut	-----	65%
Delaware**	-----	104%
Georgia	3,000-4,000	-----
Indiana	20,000+	-----
Louisiana	5,000	-----
Maine	-----	95%
Michigan	-----	2%
Montana	-----	50%
New Jersey	-----	50-60%
New York	28,000	-----
North Carolina	-----	98%
Pennsylvania	7,794	6%
South Carolina	9,500	-----
Tennessee	-----	90-95%
Texas	-----	70%
Utah	30-35,000	71-83%
Virginia	6,000	-----
Wisconsin	5,145	45%
Am Samoa	280	77%
CNMI	250	50%
RMI	255	-----
Palau	10-15	12-15%

*Not all categories of disability included in all estimates.

**Delaware percentage verified in Special Education Effectiveness Development System (SEEDS). Delaware Department of Public Instruction, 1991. Ratio formed by dividing the number of students tested (May) by the number of students eligible (September).

Figure 3

States with Formal/Written Rules for Inclusion in Assessments



States use many types of decision rules about inclusion, regardless of whether they have formal/written inclusion guidelines (see Table 8). These rules range from student characteristics or program characteristics, to undefined decisions made at the local level (usually at the school level). Clearly, most rules involve locally-determined guidelines.

Insert Table 8 about here

A variety of personnel are considered responsible for making decisions about the inclusion of specific students with disabilities (see Table 9). In most states, the IEP team is considered to have the responsibility for making inclusion decisions. The actual rules and decision makers are listed regardless of whether they overlapped. The emphasis on local control is evident in both Table 8 and Table 9.

Insert Table 9 about here

Accommodation procedures. Accommodations in testing procedures are often necessary when students with disabilities participate in general education assessments. Accommodations of some type are allowed in forty-two regular states. Formal or written guidelines are published by the state education agency in twenty-eight of these states (see Figure 4). None of the unique states have formal or written accommodation guidelines at this time.

Insert Figure 4 about here

Accommodations for students with disabilities are of four main types: alternate presentation mode, alternate response mode, flexibility of time limits, and flexibility of test setting. These are summarized in Table 10. Alternate presentation modes include the use of Braille, oral reading, sign language, large print materials, and other IEP-determined modes. Alternate response

Table 8

Decision Rules for Inclusion in State Assessments

STATE	Local Decision	Student Specific Characteristics	Level of Service Received	Courses Mainstreamed	Time in General Education	Other
Alabama	X					
Alaska		X				
Arizona	X					
Arkansas	X	X	X	X		
California			X			
Colorado			X		X	
Connecticut		X				
Delaware		X				
Florida						X
Georgia		X				
Hawaii		X			X	
Idaho					X	
Illinois	X					
Indiana						X
Iowa	X					
Kansas	X					
Kentucky	X	X				
Louisiana	X					
Maine	X	X				
Maryland						X
Massachusetts	X					
Michigan	X				X	
Minnesota	X					
Mississippi		X		X		
Missouri	X					
Montana				X	X	
Nebraska	X					
Nevada						
New Hampshire	X	X				
New Jersey						X
New Mexico		X				
New York		X				
North Carolina	X	X				
North Dakota	X	X		X		
Ohio	X	X				
Oklahoma	X					
Oregon	X					
Pennsylvania				X		
Rhode Island			X		X	
South Carolina			X			
South Dakota	X					
Tennessee	X					
Texas		X				
Utah	X					
Vermont						X
Virginia	X	X				
Washington						X
West Virginia		X				
Wisconsin			X			
Wyoming	X					
Am Samoa				X		
BIA						X
DC		X				X
Guam						
CNMI						
RMI						
Palau						X
Puerto Rico				X		
USVI	X					

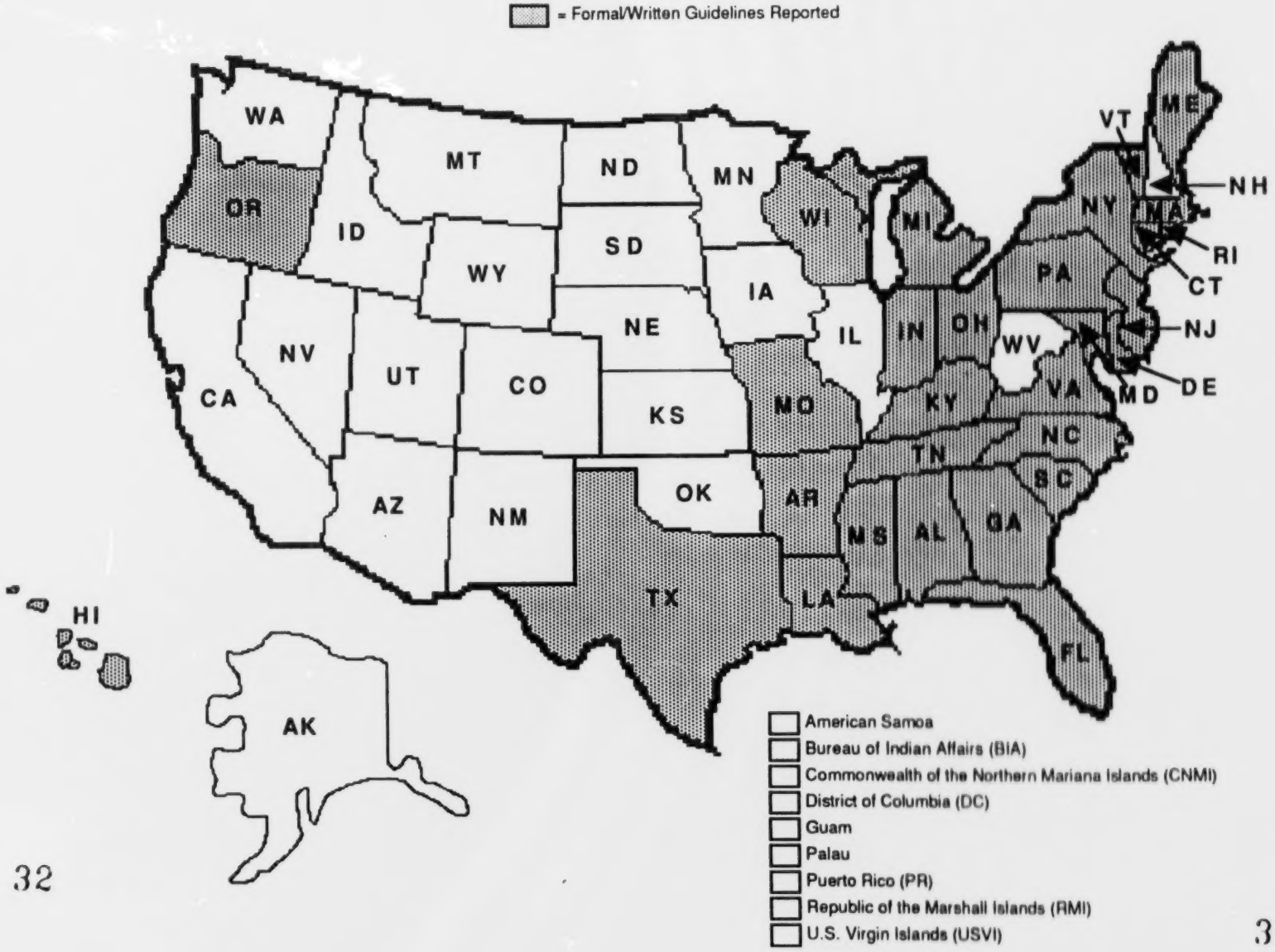
Table 9

Decision Makers for Inclusion in State Assessments

STATE	IEP Team	State Agency Personnel (SEA)	Parents	Local Decision	School Principal	Teacher	Test Personnel
Alabama	X						
Alaska	X						
Arizona	X			X			
Arkansas	X	X					
California		X					
Colorado				X			
Connecticut	X						
Delaware	X						
Florida	X		X		X		
Georgia	X		X				
Hawaii	X		X		X		
Idaho	X				X		
Illinois	X			X	X		
Indiana	X						
Iowa				X			
Kansas	X			X			
Kentucky		X					
Louisiana	X						
Maine	X						
Maryland	X						
Massachusetts	X			X			
Michigan	X				X		
Minnesota	X				X		
Mississippi	X						
Missouri	X	X		X			
Montana		X					
Nebraska				X			
Nevada	X						
New Hampshire	X		X				
New Jersey	X						
New Mexico	X			X			
New York	X		X	X			
North Carolina	X		X				
North Dakota	X			X			
Ohio	X		X				
Oklahoma	X		X	X			
Oregon				X	X		
Pennsylvania				X			
Rhode Island	X						
South Carolina	X						
South Dakota				X			
Tennessee	X						
Texas							
Utah					X		
Vermont		X					
Virginia	X						
Washington			X				
West Virginia	X						
Wisconsin	X						
Wyoming							
Am Samoa		X			X		X
BIA					X		
DC				X	X		
Guam				X	X		
CNMI					X		
RMI							
Palau				X		X	
Puerto Rico	X						
USVI					X		

Figure 4

States With Formal/Written Testing Accommodation Guidelines



modes include the use of computers, oral responses, sign language, and other IEP-determined modes. When states use IEP-determined modes, they often do not list other specific types of presentation or response modes. Alternate presentations modes, most often as prescribed by the IEP team, are the most common kind of testing accommodations made for students with disabilities.

Insert Table 10 about here

Assessment of Basic Skills

State assessments of basic academic skills focus most often on reading and mathematics, regardless of whether one looks at all states or at only those states with accessible data for students with disabilities. As indicated in Figure 5, other areas (e.g., language arts, science, etc.) are assessed by only about half as many states as are reading and math.

Insert Figure 5 about here

States are using many different kinds of instruments to assess achievement. Figure 6 shows that most common are norm-referenced tests, which are used in nineteen regular states and five unique states overall, and by twelve regular states and two unique states with accessible data. Criterion-referenced tests also are used often. Relatively speaking, more information is accessible from criterion-referenced and minimum competency measures than from norm-referenced assessments.

Insert Figure 6 about here

Barriers to Outcomes Assessment

Successful state assessments of educational outcomes for students with disabilities become more important as educational reforms gain public attention and increase calls for state agency accountability. Ten barriers to

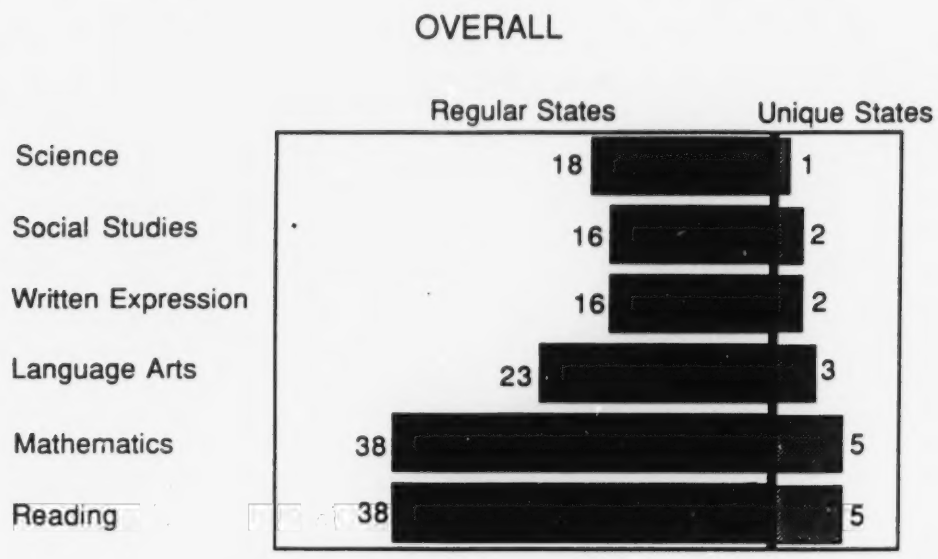
Table 10

Testing Accommodations Allowed by States

STATE	Accommodation Type				Specific Alternate Presentation Modes					Specific Alternate Response Modes			
	Flexible Time	Alternate Presentation Mode	Flexible Setting	Alternate Response Mode	Braille	Oral Reading	Sign Language	IEP Determined	Large Print	Computer	Oral Response	Sign Language	IEP Determined
Alabama	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	
Alaska		X			X			X					
Arizona	X	X			X			X		X			X
Arkansas	X	X	X	X	X		X					X	
California													
Colorado		X			X								
Connecticut	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	
Delaware	X		X						X				
Florida	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Georgia		X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	
Hawaii	X		X										
Idaho	X	X											
Illinois		X			X								
Indiana	X	X	X	X				X					
Iowa													
Kansas		X			X			X					
Kentucky	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Louisiana								X					
Maine	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Maryland	X	X	X	X				X					
Massachusetts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X				X
Michigan		X			X								
Minnesota													
Mississippi	X	X	X		X	X							
Missouri								X					
Montana								X					
Nebraska													X
Nevada								X					
New Hampshire	X	X	X	X				X					X
New Jersey	X	X	X		X	X		X					
New Mexico													X
New York	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
North Carolina	X	X	X			X		X					
North Dakota													
Ohio	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Oklahoma								X					X
Oregon													X
Pennsylvania		X			X	X							
Rhode Island		X	X	X				X	X				
South Carolina		X	X		X	X							
South Dakota													
Tennessee								X					
Texas													
Utah		X				X							
Vermont	X												X
Virginia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	
Washington		X				X							
West Virginia													
Wisconsin	X	X	X	X									
Wyoming													
Am Samoa													
BIA		X				X							
DC								X					
Guam		X				X							
CNMI													
RMI													
Palau	X	X				X							
Puerto Rico	X		X										
USVI													

Figure 5

Achievement Subject Areas Assessed by General Education



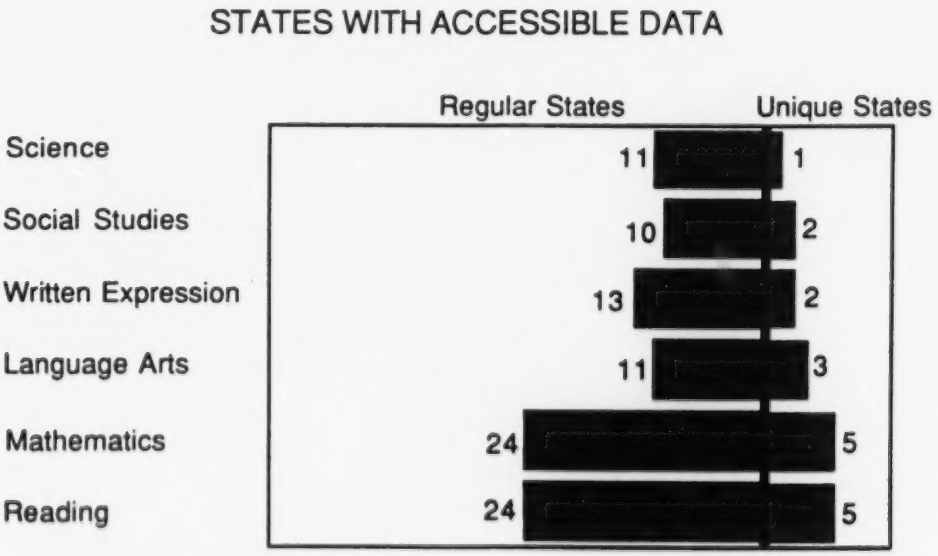
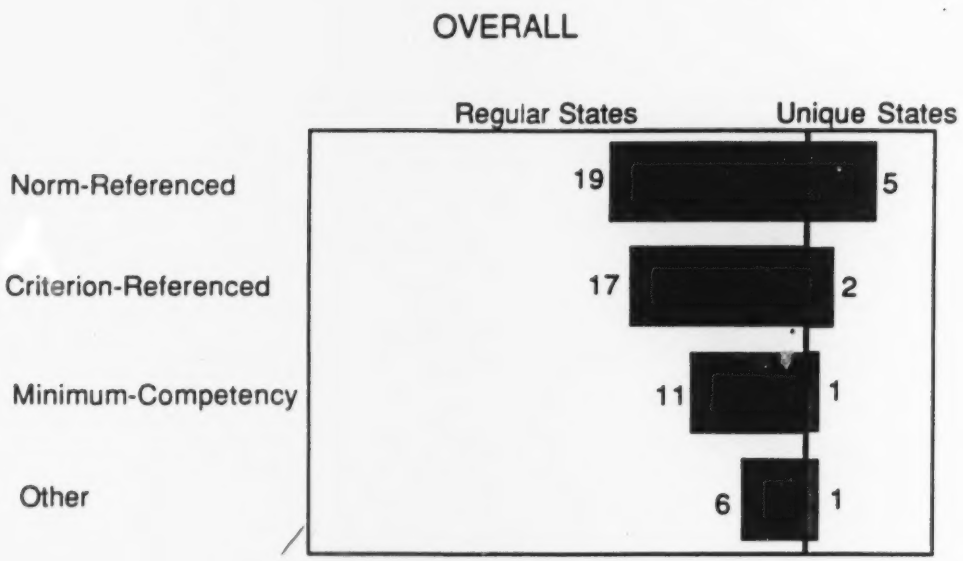
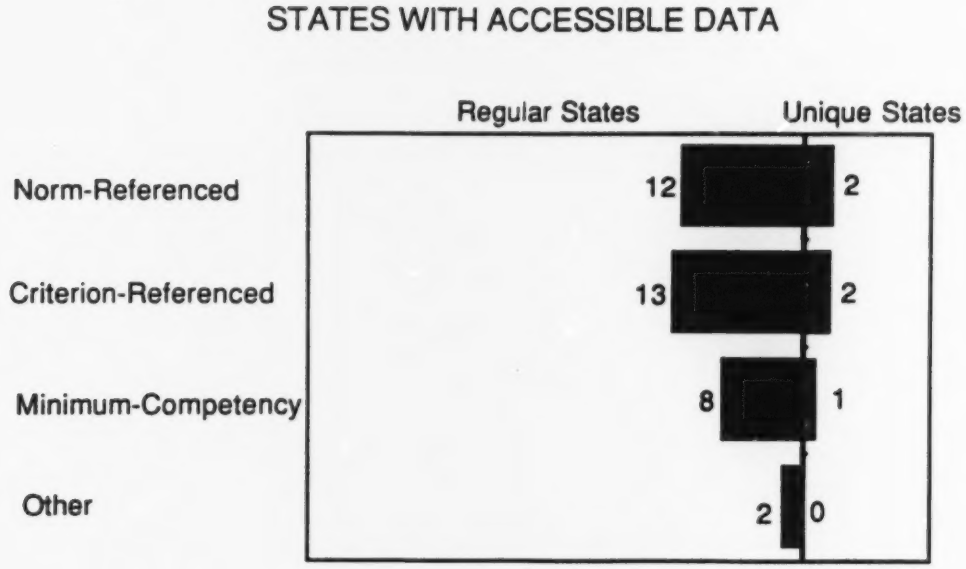


Figure 6

Types of Instruments Used for Achievement Assessments





successful assessments are listed in Table 11. The two highest frequency categories (need for useable models, definitions of outcomes) are closely related. States do not have a sure sense of what is being asked of them regarding outcomes (definitions) and many of those that appear comfortable with outcomes terminology express strong concern about how to tie such concepts together in meaningful contexts (models). The key issue is not the lack of models, but rather the concern about how to translate conceptual ideals into realistic and useful efforts that are applicable on the state level.

Another barrier is the general education unit concern about assessing outcomes for students with disabilities. This concern is perceived as reflecting an inability to tackle logistical issues, despite perceived support from general education for proposed outcomes measurement initiatives.

Technical expertise also is a serious problem for states. This barrier often reflects a perception that new programs and other changes are implemented without a solid idea of how evaluation is to be conducted. Data are considered to be an important part of evaluating policy changes, but also for maintaining existing programs. There is often conflict between established data collection efforts and alternative assessment efforts perceived to be important in the current political agenda.

Insert Table 11 about here

Assistance Needs

States identify a range of assistance needs, as shown in Table 12. Among these is the need to increase stakeholder awareness of the value of outcomes information. "Public relations work" must occur at many levels, including the local level to assure local education agency personnel of the benefits of collecting outcomes data, and the state level to emphasize the importance of

Table 11

Perceived Barriers to Outcomes Assessment

STATE	Technical Expertise	LEA Concern About Data Use	Need for Useable Models	System-Wide Concerns	Staff Limitations	Time Limitations	Definitions of Outcomes	Teacher Concerns	Assessment Instruments	General Education Unit Concerns
Alabama						X				
Alaska		X				X	X	X		
Arizona	X						X			
Arkansas							X			
California		X				X		X		
Colorado			X				X			
Connecticut	X		X						X	
Delaware	X		X				X			
Florida			X				X		X	X
Georgia		X								
Hawaii			X						X	
Idaho							X			X
Illinois	X		X				X			
Indiana	X		X			X		X		X
Iowa		X				X		X		
Kansas			X							X
Kentucky						X		X		
Louisiana						X	X			X
Maine										
Maryland		X								X
Massachusetts	X		X			X	X		X	X
Michigan		X	X	X					X	X
Minnesota										
Mississippi					X					X
Missouri		X				X				
Montana										
Nebraska			X			X	X			
Nevada			X							
New Hampshire						X				
New Jersey		X	X	X	X			X		
New Mexico										
New York			X				X			
North Carolina		X	X				X			X
North Dakota			X						X	
Ohio		X			X	X				X
Oklahoma	X				X	X		X		
Oregon	X	X				X		X		
Pennsylvania										
Rhode Island		X	X		X	X	X			
South Carolina		X		X				X		
South Dakota	X		X				X			
Tennessee	X									X
Texas							X			
Utah				X						
Vermont	X			X			X			X
Virginia		X	X						X	X
Washington						X				
West Virginia	X					X				
Wisconsin		X					X			
Wyoming						X				
Am Samoa	X							X		
BIA										X
DC			X				X			X
Guam			X							X
CNMI	X									
RMI								X		
Palau			X							X
Puerto Rico			X							X
USVI					X					

data that are inclusive of students with disabilities. The need for technical advice is also critical. States are struggling with how to shift from long-standing data collection efforts on the processes of education toward collecting information on the outcomes of schooling. Information and other support are being cited as key aspects of the shift. States are looking for clarification about expectations, requirements, and recommendations related to both a perceived emphasis on compliance and a new emphasis on outcomes.

Insert Table 12 about here

DISCUSSION

Overall, this survey confirms that considerable state and local resources are being directed to the assessment of outcomes for students with disabilities. However, there currently are few systematic approaches underway that yield state-level information. The major findings of this survey are:

- Historically, the emphasis of data collection in special education has been on documenting the process of education, not on its results.
- Participation and exit data are a major part of states' data collection efforts and may hold valuable information that is not being used fully at this time.
- State-level outcomes information is generated most often from large-scale general education assessments in which students with mild disabilities may participate, but the extent to which they participate is uncertain.
- Most states in which students with disabilities participate in academic achievement assessments do not report the data on these students.
- Despite state-level guidelines on who may be excluded from assessments and how to make testing accommodations for students with disabilities, variations in participation suggest that there is inconsistent implementation of the criteria.

Table 12

State Assistance Needs for Outcomes Assessment

STATE	OSEP Guidance	Staff Allocation	Stakeholder Awareness	Technical Advice	Inservice Training	Policy Advice	Time	General Resources
Alabama	X							
Alaska	X							
Arizona			X			X		
Arkansas	X							
California			X		X		X	
Colorado			X			X		
Connecticut						X		X
Delaware	X			X		X	X	
Florida	X		X			X		
Georgia			X	X	X			
Hawaii						X		
Idaho	X					X		
Illinois	X			X		X		X
Indiana		X	X	X			X	
Iowa				X				X
Kansas			X			X	X	
Kentucky		X	X				X	
Louisiana								
Maine				X		X		
Maryland			X	X				X
Massachusetts		X	X				X	
Michigan	X		X			X		
Minnesota					X			
Mississippi			X					
Missouri					X			
Montana								
Nebraska								
Nevada				X				X
New Hampshire			X	X		X		
New Jersey	X	X	X	X		X		X
New Mexico			X	X				
New York			X	X				
North Carolina			X		X			
North Dakota			X	X	X			
Ohio	X			X	X	X		
Oklahoma		X		X				
Oregon			X				X	
Pennsylvania						X		
Rhode Island			X	X				
South Carolina			X	X				
South Dakota	X	X		X				
Tennessee				X				
Texas								
Utah								
Vermont								X
Virginia	X							
Washington			X					
West Virginia					X			X
Wisconsin	X							
Wyoming		X		X	X		X	X
Am Samoa	X			X	X			
BIA								
DC	X					X		
Guam			X					
CNMI			X					
RMI								
Palau				X	X			
Puerto Rico				X				
USVI	X		X			X		

- States are struggling with how to shift from long-standing data collection efforts on the processes of education toward collecting information on the outcomes of schooling.
- States are looking for clarification about expectations, requirements, and recommendations related to the current emphasis on compliance as well as the new emphasis on outcomes.

Taken together, these findings suggest that states have begun to face the demands of increased accountability. Each state activity, presents policy makers and assessment personnel with troublesome challenges for which there are no easy answers.

Major challenges for future efforts regarding outcomes assessment range from political to practical that are affected by differing pressures at different levels. Policies of states are well intended, but many efforts they guide are implemented at the local level with varying degrees of consistency. Because of the possible political (and likely financial) importance of certain assessments, this situation is certainly understandable. However, many times students with disabilities are included or excluded based on the perceived importance of increasing or decreasing the probability of lower or higher total school scores. Linking the assessment of outcomes to the state and local setting contexts requires that both groups of decision-makers be agreeable to, and comfortable with, the decisions and practices that are ultimately used. Many state agency respondents believed that much stakeholder awareness education was needed. Only when the value of outcomes data is recognized at all levels and open communication about intended use of data is commonplace, will the process of gathering meaningful information from assessments take place statewide on a more consistent basis.

Along with inclusion decisions, of course, are the logistical and technical difficulties of special accommodations that are required in many

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

assessments. These concerns were raised by most survey respondents, who pointed out that the state agency is seldom in a position to monitor test accommodation decisions and their implementation. Consequently, states are unsure about the comparability of data reported to them by local agencies, and assessment information is sometimes ignored or suppressed in later state reporting activities.

This situation is a type of good-news, bad-news scenario. On the one hand, states are aware of the need for technically adequate assessments and recognize that information on students with disabilities often falls short in important technical considerations. On the other hand, it appears that some states are choosing the easy way out by simply eliminating the assessments of special needs students in their state-level analyses and reporting activities, and that relatively few are actively addressing these issues. For the future, it will be important to follow states' efforts to make better and more efficient use of data that are being collected, so that descriptions of how special education students are faring in terms of educational outcomes might become more common.

To this point, most of this discussion has been intended to address outcomes in general, but the examples provided relate most often to assessments of academic achievement. It is important to remember that there <u>are</u> outcomes of schooling that can not be categorized in terms of the major curricular areas. Most people would agree that outcomes include knowledge skills, and attitudes. Efforts to assess outcome domains other than academics are minimal in both the general education and special education units of state agencies. What is disconcerting about this situation, is that the apparent trend for future assessment efforts appears to be even more restrictive in the domains likely to be addressed. Current pushes by major national councils and

groups (e.g., National Council on Educational Standards and Testing) suggest that consideration of outcomes areas other than academic is not the direction toward which resources are likely to be allocated. It is important to take a comprehensive view of outcomes for all students - one that is not limited to typical domains and assessments. While the efforts of major groups are certainly productive and worthy of consideration, it is essential that we keep a broad and inclusive perspective of educational outcome domains.

Through other activities of NCEO and through follow-up surveys, we will work to understand and describe what it takes to implement various forms of outcomes assessment. Students with disabilities can not be overlooked in the changes that are occurring in educational practices at any level, from national standard setting to classroom instruction. Currently, it appears that many special education students become lost in the crowd of calls for reform and change. If nothing else, the survey activity identified the many possible places where these students seem to disappear; we should work very hard to find them a proper place in the outcomes assessment system.

REFERENCES

Dillman, D. A. (1978). Mail and telephone surveys: The total design method. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

ETS (Educational Testing Service), (1990). The national assessment. Washington, DC: National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP).

Walther-Thomas, C. (1990). State mandated outcomes assessment of students with mild disabilities. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas, Lawrence.

Ysseldyke, J. E., Thurlow, M. L., Bruininks, R. H., Deno, S. L., McGrew, K. S., & Shriner, J. G. (1991). A conceptual model of educational outcomes for children and youth with disabilities (Working paper). Minneapolis, MN: National Center on Educational Outcomes, University of Minnesota.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE